THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

BY A LAYMAN.

"NOCTURNA VERSATE MANU, VERSATE DIURNA."——"BE THESE YOUR STUDIES BY DAY AND BY NIGHT."

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ESSAYS AND PARAGRAPHS,

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

REFLECTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

"*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs "of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.*"

JAMES ii. 5.

IT was once said by two Cardinals, (who riding to the council of Constance, overheard a poor shepherd in the fields with tears lamenting his sins) *Surgent indocti et rapient cœlum.*—"The unlearned will rise and take Heaven, while we, with all our learning, shall descend into Hell." How truly is this observation verified in the present day, and melancholy to relate, that those whom God pours down his blessings upon, and to whom he offers freely his mercy, and even, if I may be allowed the expression, throws his various means of grace into their way, that they may have no excuse that they sought him in vain. These are the very persons, we will find, who in general, reject the Gospel of Christ, and choose rather to be clothed with the robes of their own righteousness, than those of an all-sufficient Saviour. The reason, therefore, why those persons reject the Gospel, is evident; they think themselves rich in their own righteousness and good works, and have no necessity of applying to another—"*for the whole need no physician.*" They think themselves rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; "*not knowing, they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" Indeed, they vainly fancy, like the rich man in the Gospel, who did not know where to bestow his fruits, and said—"This will I do; I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods, and I will say to my soul—Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." But let me ask, what did God say to this? "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure to himself and is not rich towards God." Consider this all ye who are like-minded with this rich man, and how awful will be the disappointment in the end, when, instead of enjoying your riches and all those things that have been your consolation here, you must part with them for ever; and then, if the door of mercy is shut, it will be in vain and too late, to say—"Lord, Lord! open unto us."

It is indeed hard to say, whether the rich or the poor, who live without God in the world, are most to be pitied. It is, however, a dreadful case to be miserable in both worlds, and surely the parade and seeming prosperity in which some live for a few years, will, in place of lessening, be rather a greater aggravation of their future torment. We are led to pity a madman, whether laid upon a bed of state or a bed of straw: And yet, madness is in the heart of every unregenerate sinner, and the more he possesses of this world's goods, he is so much the more extensively mischievous: Yet, whether mad or foolish, rich, or poor, if God undertakes to be the Teacher, *our capacity or situation*, is of very little consequence. AUSTIN speaks of one who was commonly reputed a fool, and yet he could not but judge him to be truly godly, and that by two signs of grace which appeared in him. One was his seriousness, when he heard any discourses of Christ, and the other, his indignation manifested against sin. We may therefore infer, that the words chosen for this evening's reflections, are really true in the strictest sense, and that "God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him:" For poverty is so far a negative good, to those who have no other restraint, that it confines the effects of the evil heart within narrower bounds, and the small circle of their own immediate connections: Whereas, the rich, who live under the power and dominion of sin, are unfaithful stewards of a larger trust, and by their pernicious influence, are too often, alas! instrumental in diffusing profaneness and licentiousness every where within their reach, besides those deeds perpetrated to gratify the insatiable demands of luxury, ambition and pride.

The Bible, indeed, informs us, that God is no respecter of persons; therefore, he does not choose the poor merely because they are poor; but we may say, that HE, knowing what is in their hearts, and the nature of the world through which they are to pass, and what circumstances are best suited to manifest the truth and efficacy of his grace, HE has in general chosen poverty as the best state for those whom HE chooses to enrich with his divine grace. Numerous exceptions are no doubt made, that the all-sufficiency of his grace may be made known in every state of life; but for the most part, God's people are a poor and afflicted people, and in this appointment, we see every thing wisely ordered for their eternal salvation and happiness.

Sanctified poverty is an honorable state, but not so in the estimation of the world; for the rich have many friends, but the poor are usually despised. If we, however, look to that honour which cometh from God only, we will find, that the poor, who are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, are honored with the nearest external conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ, their Saviour and Redeemer. HE, although Lord of all! yet for our sakes, made himself so poor, that he had not where to lay his head; and by his astonishing humiliation, he poured the utmost contempt on all human glory, and made the state of poverty honourable indeed: Such as was the blessed and lowly

Jésus, so were his Apostles in the world: And, surely, that state of life in which our blessed Lord was pleased to converse with men, and which was the lot of his Apostles and his most favoured servants, it cannot indeed be called or esteemed dishonourable.

Poverty is honourable, because it affords many peculiar advantages for glorifying God and evidencing the power of his grace, and the faithfulness of his promises in the sight of men; for the poor are the best and the most unsuspected witnesses for the truth of the Gospel: And if we see the poor delight themselves in God; esteem a day in his courts better than a thousand, and prefer the light of his countenance to all earthly joy: if we see them content, thankful, rejoicing, admiring the Lord's goodness, for affording them what men in ordinary circumstances would count hard fare, and in the midst of various pressures and temptations, incapable of being bribed by offers, or tempted by threats, to depart or swerve from the path of known duty; if we see this, surely we must acknowledge, that "*this is the finger of* God," and if hardened against such evidence as this, "neither would be persuaded though one should arise from the dead." Although poverty is comparatively a safe state, yet it is attended with its many peculiar temptations; but it is not near so suitable to draw forth and nurture the two great corruptions of the human heart—self-importance and an idolatrous cleaving to the world, as its opposite state of riches. They, indeed, who are rich in this world, who are come to a knowledge of the salvation that is in Jesus, and who know from experience the corruption and depravity of their own hearts; will duly appreciate the Apostle's charge, who says—"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Therefore, if poor believers would but consider the snares and temptations to which their rich brethren are exposed, they will rather pray for and pity, than envy them; for their path is a slippery one and they have reason to cry continually—"Hold thou me up and I shall be safe," as they live in the midst of the allurements and vanities of the world, and are engaged in pursuits and such a sphere of action as lays them open to be led captive by Satan at his will. Certainly poor believers enjoy advantages which are seldom, or indeed ever received or acknowledged with the same thankfulness by the rich. Those are spiritual comforts and consolations, which are the blessed effects of the repeated risings and light of God's glorious countenance, being lifted up upon their souls, and his love shed abroad in their hearts, by which they can rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." As they have but little comfort or consolation from the world, they derive their all from HIM who is their only and certain source of every true comfort; who gives them day by day their daily bread, and feeds them with food convenient for them. If this is so, why then ye poor, who are perhaps brought into your present situation, through the mercy and love of your Heavenly Father, to your immortal souls; why will you repine or try to counteract the wise dispensations of God, who ordereth every thing aright, that all things may work for good to those who love Him. Repine not at your situation, but humbly prostrate yourselves before the throne of grace, and seek for resignation to his will, through the influence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in your hearts by faith. Seek for an interest in Christ, that your eternal salvation may be sealed through the atoning blood of a crucified Redeemer. This granted, let God who is infinite in wisdom, goodness and mercy, do it in his own way and after the pleasure of his own will. Think ye, will your poverty and trials here, lessen your happiness hereafter, when you are become inheritors with the Saints in light; or will they not heighten your enjoyments and felicity, to think that the days of your mourning are ended, and that you have the blessed privilege of being numbered amongst those who "who came out of great tribulations and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 14, 17.

OMICRON.

AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE.—*SELECTED.*

Dr. PORTEUS, the late Bishop of London, employed his unwearied exertions for the suppression of vice in that city, and particularly for the purpose of procuring a more reverential observance of the Sabbath. Among his measures for that end, he wrote several letters, with good effect, to ladies of high rank, who had been in the practice of making the Sabbath a day of amusement. "The last public act of his life was directed toward the same object." The account is given in the Bishop's own words, by the Rev. Robert Hodgson, who was in the possession of his manuscripts, and wrote his life.

"I had for some time past observed in several of the papers, an account of a meeting, chiefly of military gentlemen, at an hotel at the west end of the town, which was regularly announced as held every other Sunday during the winter season. This appeared to me, and to every friend of religion, a needless and wanton profanation of the Christian Sabbath, which by the laws both of God and man was set apart for very different purposes; and the bishops and clergy were severely censured for permitting such a glaring abuse of that sacred day to pass without notice or reproof. I determined that it should not, and therefore thought it best to go at once to the fountain head, to the person of the highest and principal influence in the meeting, the Prince of Wales. I accordingly requested the honour of an audience, and a personal conference with him on the subject. He very graciously granted it; and I had a conversation with him of more than half an hour. He entered immediately into my views, and confessed that he saw no reasons for holding the meeting on Sundays more than on other days of the week; and he voluntarily promised, that the day should be changed from Sunday to Saturday, for which he said he would give immediate orders."

THE EFFECT OF TRUE RELIGION.—*SELECTED.*

"True religion," says the venerable BURNET, "is the perfection of human nature, and the joy and delight of every one that feels it active and strong within him. Of this I write with more concern and emotion, because I have felt this the true, and indeed the only joy which runs through a man's heart and life. It is that which has been for many years my greatest support. I rejoice daily in it; I feel in it the earnest of that supreme joy, which I pant and long for. I am sure there is nothing else can afford any true or complete happiness. I have, considering my sphere, seen a great deal of all that is most shining and tempting in this world. The pleasures of sense I did soon nauseate. Intrigues of state, and the conduct of affairs, have something in them that is more specious; and I was for some years deeply

immersed in these, but still with hopes of reforming the world, and of making mankind wiser and better. But I have found, that which is crooked cannot be made straight. I acquainted myself with knowledge and learning, and that in a great variety. This yielded not happiness. I cultivated friendship. But this also I have found was vanity and vexation of spirit, though it be of the best and noblest sort. The sum is, vanity of vanities, all is vanity, besides fearing God, and keeping his commandments."

EPISTOLARY.

LETTERS

FROM BARON HALLER TO HIS DAUGHTER,

On the Truths of the Christian Religion.

LETTER VII.

Antiquity and authenticity of the Scriptures. Truth of Christianity proved by Prophecy. The Christian Religion opposite to the inclinations and passions of human nature.

It is not, my dear child, my design to run over all the prophecies that have foretold a Messiah, a prophet, a Redeemer, who was to make satisfaction for the sins of the world, and restore the kingdom of God. I shall content myself with referring to a few places in the ancient oracles, where the coming of our Saviour is predicted in very express terms.

But I must first surmise, that the antiquity of those books, to which I allude, has never been disputed; neither are the objections of any weight which have been urged against them. Three hundred years before the birth of Christ, all these books were translated into the Greek language at Alexandria; they were then very ancient; but it is sufficient for our purpose to alledge, that Jesus frequently appeals to them as to prophecies much older than himself, and with which the world abounded. Perhaps every one does not know in what manner the religion of the Jews was spread. It appears, from the writings of a satyrical poet, the cotemporary and favorite of the Emperor Augustus, that at Rome, which was the common rendezvous of all nations, and in particular of men of rank and fortune, many persons scrupled to violate the Sabbath-day by any kind of work or labor. All the Jews had their public seminaries, and books of their law, both in Hebrew and Greek.

To this remark we must add, that we are removed some thousands of years from the time in which the books to which I appeal were written. The manners of men, in the ages I speak of, their language, their expressions, are very different from those which prevail in the western hemisphere which we inhabit. Many things were easy and intelligible to those people who were of warm and lively imaginations, which we cannot, without great difficulty, comprehend. Custom had given a determinate sense to many of their figures, which appear to us strange and unusual. Their oral tradition served likewise as an explication to divers things, which in the infancy of the arts and sciences were but seldom written, or set down in very few words.

It is, however, incontestible, that in the early ages fallen man had the promise of a Redeemer. The sage Persians, and the Brachmans, whose writings have of late years been studied, spoke a long time since, and with confidence, of the future appearance of a Mediator. But what renders this general opinion the more credible, is, that the most ancient of all the propheeies related to this Redeemer so universally expected; which prophecy is this—*that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*—that serpent which had seduced the mother of mankind.

When it was said to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, that *in them should all the nations of the earth be blessed*, it is not possible to interpret this prediction in any other sense than this—that the Saviour of the world should be born of one of their descendants. We cannot, with any degree of reason, apply this prophecy to their posterity, considered in a general view; because they consisted of a people so different from the rest of the world, and with whom they had so little communication, that it is not to be presumed that so universal a blessing could be derived from them, and extend its influence over all the nations of the earth. The prophecy concerning Shiloh, which hath been the occasion of so much controversy, and of which so many explications have been given, may, however, be elucidated from those most ancient predictions, which imply that the Messiah should be born at a time, when the sceptre, departing from the house of Judah, should fall into the hands of a stranger, nor any longer be held by a person of Jewish extraction.

Moses had very expressly promised the appearance of a prophet, and indeed the only prophet, which would resemble him, more especially in this particular—*That God would reveal to him his will, which he was to communicate to men*—in this consisted the peculiar prerogative of Moses, which distinguished him from all those whom God had raised up in the midst of that nation. As it is my design to treat of these subjects with as much brevity as possible, I should be drawn into a dissertation too copious, were I to take notice of the several places in the Psalms, where the coming of some extraordinary person is promised to mankind; whom David has described in such brilliant colours that they cannot possibly be applied to a mere man.

Such was the character given by Isaiah of the future Messiah, that it cannot agree with any other person but Jesus. His entire book, though a long one, contains little else but the history of this Messiah that was to come, and of the new church of which he was to be the head. When he describes this extraordinary gift from Heaven, which was to appear in the person of the Redeemer, he speaks of him in a kind of triumph, and with the utmost magnificence of language:—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government "shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonder-"ful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince "of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall "be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to or-"der it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from "henceforth even for ever." This prophet expressly foretold the very place of his birth; declaring, that a great light was to rise in Galilee of the Gentiles, for there was Nazareth situated. He also discriminated the family of which he was to be born, and that was of Jesse the Father of David. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness*, which was a kind of an harbinger to the Messiah, was also to prepare for his coming. Mildness was to be the character of his reign; peace was to flourish upon the earth, and of his empire there was to be no end. He promised, that, in this happy age, *the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the sucking child play on the hole of the asp.* He farther speaks of him in these words: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor "cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he "not break, and the smoaking flax shall not be quenched: he shall "seek judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law. His "church shall extend as far as the earth; remote people shall be con-"verted to him, and shall bring to an end the ungrateful nation of the "Hebrews." And in order to suppress that worldly temper of the Jews, which induced them to expect a temporal monarch, a king of human race, who should reign with uncontrolled power, he has been very careful to describe, in the most pointed and expressive terms, the humble condition in which the Messiah was to appear, and the sufferings which were reserved for him; but who would afterwards be exalted to the highest state of dignity. He represented him, at the same time, as a person whose exterior form would be humble, and whose appearance would be the meanest amongst the children of men—"He shall grow before him," says Isaiah, "as a tender plant, "and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; "and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquaint-"ed with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was "despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our "griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken,

"smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our trans-
"gressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our
"peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed. All we
"like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own
"way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was
"oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He
"was taken from prison and from judgment; he was cut off from the
"land of the living; he made his grave with the wicked and with the
"rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any
"deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he
"hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for
"sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure
"of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail
"of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my right-
"eous servant justify many; for he shall fear their iniquities. There-
"fore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide
"the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto
"death, and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare
"the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Almost all the prophets have predicted the destruction of the Jewish nation, and the establishment of a new kingdom, without comparison more extensive than that of Judah, and in greatness infinitely superior to it, at the time when it should be governed by the kings descended from David. The style of these predictions is in the oriental manner; and indeed could not be otherwise, to make any impression upon the minds of the inhabitants of those hot climates; where language, for many ages, even before the time of Moses, was always highly figurative, and to whom the prosaic, uniform diction of the northern people appeared insupportably frigid and disgusting.

In many other passages we discern evident traces of the promised Redeemer. The place of his nativity is mentioned; and, notwithstanding the addition of certain circumstances extraneous to him, yet we may plainly discover a person spoken of, whose lineage would be very ancient, whose days would be eternal, and whose coming would exterminate idolatry.

To this succeeded the famous prophecies of Daniel; which were so clear and accurate, that Porphyry, not being able to refute them, endeavored to invalidate their divine authority, by insinuating that they were written after the event had happened. The suspicions of this ancient writer, who has been too successfully followed by the free-thinkers of the present age, may, with equal propriety, be applied in opposition to what we find in the writings of this prophet concerning the kings of Syria and Egypt. All the prophecies which regard the Messiah were free from every appearance of compulsion—the book of Daniel was translated into the Greek language more than two centuries before the coming of Christ; which translation was in the hands both of the Jews and Gentiles.

Daniel, having addressed the Almighty in private prayer, that out of his abundant goodness, he would pardon the sins of his people, and rebuild Jerusalem, received in a vision this answer—"Seventy weeks
"are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish
"the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make recon-
"ciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and
"to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.
"Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the
"commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah
"the prince shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the
"streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.
"And after threescore and two weeks shall the Messiah be cut off,
"but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come,
"shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall
"be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are deter-
"mined; and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week;
"and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the ob-
"lation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations he shall
"make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined
"shall be poured upon the desolate."

In another place, other events are foretold by this prophet; the time in which they were to happen is precisely marked; and it was signified to him that it was yet at some distance, but that he who was reserved for this person, should not enter into his rest till the completion of these days. It was farther intimated, that the end of the world, for this is the sense of the original, was to be reckoned from the time that the daily sacrifice should be abolished, and that abomination should be introduced, which was to be the cause of the great desolation that was to follow.

I designedly omit some particular characteristics of the Messiah which are scattered in the writings of the prophets; more especially those that have a doubtful or ambiguous complexion.—I shall reduce the few materials which I have collected from the prophecies to the following observations.

In all the ancient books, on whose authenticity we may safely rely, this point of doctrine is constantly and invariably inculcated—That there would appear in the world a person of great dignity, who would bring salvation with him, and re-establish justice.

This eminent personage is described under different characters. He was to spring from the posterity of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and from one of the descendants of David. He was to assume the prophetic office, and to perform supernatural works.

His power was not to be supported by force or violence; he was to reign by persuasion, by kindness, and benefits.

The place of his birth was fixed; and the exact time of it determined. The edict of the king of Persia was the epocha from whence this computation was to be made.

His sufferings are described in a circumstantial manner; and painted in lively and pathetic colours. His death was also positively foretold.

But that which makes the greatest impression upon my mind, are the following particulars—the grandeur and debasement which are blended in this extraordinary person, his divine origin, his meditorial office, his sufferings, the meanness of his appearance, and the duties he discharged as Redeemer of the world. This portrait hath not its original amongst mankind; it never was conceived by the wit of any mortal being. The Jews themselves, who, in preference to the rest of mankind, were to receive the Messiah, to whom in a more particular manner he was to be a Saviour, and who were his disciples and neighbors, could not, however, be persuaded that he was the person described by the prophets. Their sordid minds could form no other idea of a prince of the royal house of David, but as a king, the possessor of a throne, a conqueror, and victorious monarch.

The prophets, notwithstanding, had united, in the most positive and express terms, this grandeur and meanness of condition in the character which they had drawn of the Saviour of mankind.

This person, they said, is from all eternity; he will carry with him sufficient proofs that he proceeded from God alone; yet he will be born, will live in the greatest poverty, will suffer, and be put to death.

He will rise from the dead; he will reign for ever; he will shower down his blessing upon all people; he will appease the Supreme Being; he will restore to men that justice which they had lost. He will die, not for himself, but for the world; he will be bruised for their offences, he will lay down his life as an oblation for sin.

From the foundation of the world there hath appeared but one man in whom are united all these characteristics; and this was Jesus of Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, descended from David, always addressed by that name by those who had recourse to him for relief; whom the people would more than once have placed upon the throne, whose parents, in the reign of Domitian, were exposed to great danger because of their son, and who escaped death by reason of their poverty and abject condition.

This Jesus preached his doctrine without noise and tumult; he did nothing but what was good; the rectitude of his conduct was invariably the same, and never was calumniated; he was held in respect during the three first centuries after his coming into the world, in those sorrowful times when the religion which he had announced was condemned by the laws of the Pagans, mortally hated both by them and the Jews, and exposed to the cruellest assaults—when nothing prevented the enemies of the faith from making the strictest researches, to discover any fault with which they might accuse its au-

thor—in those times, when a learned sophist, at the head of the first university in the world, attacked the Christian doctrine by his writings, and employed all the artifices of the most inveterate persecutors, to exterminate it from the face of the earth—in those times, when a Celsus endeavored to load it with the foulest reproaches—when a Lucian attempted to expose the Christians to ridicule, by the keenness and severity of his satire—when the Jews anathematized and deserted them, as apostates from their religion and worship, and exhibited against them a most inveterate animosity, which they imbibed, as it were, in their cradle—in those times so unfavorable to the Christian cause; no one, however, impeached the innocence of its divine Author—no one attacked the integrity and simplicity of his first disciples. He said of himself, and this indeed was the substance of all his discourses, and of those of his apostles, that he came into the world to suffer for the sins of men. In conformity to this design, he resigned himself into the hands of his enemies; he received, as a disciple, one who, under the semblance of friendship, betrayed him; whose perfidy and intended guilt were however perfectly known to him. His last discourses were an intercession in favor of his deluded people, and his last words were a declaration that he had accomplished his task.

By his death, the glorious promises of the prophets obtained their full accomplishment. An immense kingdom extended itself over all parts of the earth, and sprung, as it were, from his blood. The Gentiles, in great numbers, embraced the Christian faith; the profession of which notwithstanding, exposed them to almost inevitable death. Their manners were reformed; and an universal charity was introduced into the hearts of those who before had hated all nations except themselves. Chastity succeeded to that profligacy and impurity with which their very temples were defiled. Freedom was given to the slaves; and the world became one family of brethren, united by similar sentiments.

This character, which was too sublime for the reason of man to imagine or conceive, was perfectly realized in Christ: in whom we may discern all those features which are so clearly marked by the ancient prophets.

He whom God only could describe by his servants, so many ages before his coming, appeared at last with true greatness—a greatness resulting from the immense benefits of the sacrifice of himself, which no man could foresee, because no man was capable of it.

The character of so divine a person, destined, however, to punishment, was never imagined by the wisest of men; and, when the original was actually seen, it was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.

Since the first converts among the most enlightened nations of the East judged it necessary, in pursuance of the design they had in view, to conceal from their disciples the mean appearance of the Mediator or Redeemer whom they preached, would Isaiah, if he had been influenced by the same prudential motives, have drawn a picture which was without resemblance, either in human events, or in any ideas which had been conceived by man? Could there be found a person so impious as to assume the character of the Saviour of the world; a character of great utility to mankind, but which could not fail to bring upon him who personated it, if he would literally accomplish the prophecies, a long train of labors and sufferings, and at last a shameful death?

It is easy to be seen, from an examination of the actions of our Saviour, that no impostor could possibly, by any artifice, realize in his own person all those circumstances so particularly enumerated by the prophets; these could only be completely verified by him who was the true archetype of the picture delineated. He must be born of a certain family, and of the blood of David.—Bethlehem must be the place of his birth, and this light must first shine in Galilee. The time of his coming and his oblation had been fixed; the manner in which he must be interred was particularly described; after his death the sacrifice was to cease; the ensigns of the Romans, ornamented with the images of their false gods, were to be displayed in a place where they ought never to have appeared; he was himself to live in poverty, and to shed his blood for the sins of men; but his spiritual kingdom was to be infinite, as well in extent as duration. It was therefore requisite that the Messiah should accomplish, in his own person, all those predictions of the prophets, if he would be recognized as the person whom Israel, for so many ages, had expected.

It had been impossible for a mere human being, without the assistance of God, to have distinguished himself by all those characteristics which were necessary to appear in the Messiah. Add to this, the time of his birth, his genealogy, the great effects produced from causes so trivial, the prodigious success which attended his ministry, though the time was so short, and the country so despised in which he was employed in teaching a doctrine that spread itself into all places, and has been perpetuated through every succeeding age.

There is nothing which so much distinguishes the Christian religion as its opposition to the passions and inclinations of human nature. The example of its great founder is unprecedented. Where shall we find a man who, like him, devoted his whole life te labor; preferred a state of poverty and contempt; exposed himself to continual dangers, without expecting any other fruit than inevitable death?

It evidently appears, then, that no human address or artifice could invest a person with the distinguishing characters of the Messiah; and even if it had been in the power of any man to have assumed them, it would have been a proof of prudence and discretion to have declined the arduous task, since it could procure him nothing but sufferings and distress.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CONNECTICUT. HARTFORD, APRIL 29.

ORDINATION.

On Wednesday, the 24th inst. the Rev. FRANCIS L. ROBBINS, was ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry, in the town of Enfield. The Rev. Mr. Rowland, of Windsor, made the introductory prayer. The Rev. Dr. Hyde, of Lee, preached the sermon, from Acts viii. 5. The Rev. Mr. Storrs, of Longmeadow, made the consecrating prayer. The Rev. Dr. Perkins, of West-Hartford, gave the charge. The Rev. Mr. Robbins, of East-Windsor, gave the right hand of fellowship. The Rev. Mr. Knapp, of Westfield, made the concluding prayer. The occasion received an additional interest from the decent deportment and solemn attention of a very numerous audience. This Society, who were deeply afflicted with the sudden death of their venerable and beloved Minister, last September, now find their efforts and liberality rewarded, in the happy settlement of a successor, with the undiminished unanimity of the people.

INTELLIGENCE FROM ABROAD.

BISHOP ASBURY.

The substance of a Letter from the Rev. John W. Bond, to the Rev. Bishop M'Kendree, giving a particular Account of the Death of the Rev. FRANCIS ASBURY, Senior Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the United States of America.

SPOTTSYLVANIA, *(Va.)* APRIL 1, 1816.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Probably before this will reach you, you will have heard its solemn contents from some other source; but still I feel it my duty to send you a particular account of what has taken place: Yesterday, the Lord visited us with a most solemn and afflicting Providence:—He has taken our venerable father from us—Yes! BISHOP ASBURY is dead!

We reached the house of his old friend, John Potts, in Manchester, on Saturday the 16th day of March. On Sabbath he insisted on speaking to a congregation, to be convened at four o'clock, in brother Potts's house. Though it was with difficulty he could be heard, yet he spake for more than an hour; and, when done, did not appear so

much exhausted as I expected. On Monday, though the weather was unfavourable, we crossed over to Richmond and put up with brother Raymond. On Thursday, we moved to brother A. Foster's. On Sunday, 24th, he persisted in a resolution to speak to the congregation, at three o'clock in the afternoon. I feared the consequence, and urged every thing I could, with prudence, to dissuade him from it; but he said, GOD had given him a work to do there, and he must deliver his testimony. At the time appointed, he was carried into the Meeting-house, and sat in the pulpit, on a table, when he preached his last sermon, from Rom. chap. ix. and 28th verse.—"*For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.*" He spake near an hour, and when done, was almost spent. We, however, set out on Tuesday and travelled twenty-two miles. Father Foster accompanied us to our old friend, Crenshaw's. Being much fatigued, and very unwell, he tarried here on Wednesday, and requested that an appointment should be made, and word sent out, that there would be preaching at four o'clock in the afternoon, saying—"He wished those that were with him to do something, if he could not." A small congregation collected, to whom I preached, but our venerable father was too unwell to come into the congregation.

On Thursday we again set out, and travelled twenty miles, and put up with our good friend and brother, Edward Rouzee—here he was exceedingly feeble, though cheerful. We set out again on Friday. Brother Rouzee came several miles with us, and then took leave as one who was giving up his father to die. We dined at Brother Hancock's, and then proceeded to our old friend, George Arnold's, travelling in all this day, about twelve miles; but I never saw him so much exhausted in travelling before. He said to me, on Saturday morning—"If this should be as good a day as yesterday, we can hardly help travelling some." It however rained, and I was not sorry to see it, wishing to rest. It being proposed that we should have meeting on Sabbath, I spake of sending a note to a family about five miles off, who, it was said, would be much gratified to know it. The Bishop hearing it, replied—"You need not be in a hurry;" which was so unusual a thing for him to say respecting meeting, especially on the Lord's day, that I concluded he apprehended that he would be too weak to bear the noise of a meeting in the house. He spent a very restless night, and in the morning appeared more than usually unwell, I proposed sending for a physician, the family saying, that there was a Dr. Lewis, a practitioner of eminence, about ten or twelve miles off. He objected, saying—"I shall not be able to tell him what is the matter with me, and the man will not know what to do." On my urging it again, he said—"He could only pronounce me *dead*." I said—"Probably he could give you something that would relieve you." He replied, "My breath will be gone before he can get here." I said, "I hope you have no apprehension of any thing so serious taking place—have you?" He answered—"Yes." After a while, I asked him, "Whether, if any thing serious should take place, he had any word to leave with me. He said, *He had spoken, and written so fully, that it was unnecessary.* I told him, "that I had heard him speak so frequently on the affairs of the church, that I believed I understood his sentiments fully." He replied—"Yes."

After a while, asking the hour of the day, and being told that it was near eleven; he asked, if it was not "*time for meeting?*" being told, that there were none present but the family, he replied—"call them together—I want to have meeting." They being collected, I read what was our Lesson for the day, the 21st chapter of the book of Revelation; it being remarkable, that the last chapter in the Revelation, which in course would have been read in the evening, should be the Lesson which should close the day on which he closed his labours.—During the whole of the meeting his soul seemed much engaged; and as it was truly an affecting time, he appeared much elevated and raised his hands frequently in token of triumph. When meeting was over, he called on me to "read the mite subscription." But being told that there were none present but the family, he said no more.—His calling for this to be read, shews, that even the pangs of death were not able to wrest from him the interests of the missions which lay with so much weight on his mind.

After this his voice failed, but still he gave evidence that he possessed his reason to the last. A little before he died, finding that I was affected at his not being able to take a little barley water which I offered to him in a tea-spoon, he lifted up his hand toward Heaven, in token that he should soon be there. I then asked him if he found that Jesus was present? when he raised both his hands toward Heaven, with an expression which I shall never forget. He then, without a groan or complaint, fell asleep in the arms of his Saviour, at four o'clock, on Sunday, the 31st of March, 1816.

His venerable remains I expect to be interred to-morrow, in the family burying-ground of his old friend, brother George Arnold.

Yours with respect,

JOHN W. BOND.

Rev. Bishop M'Kendree.

Extract of a letter from the Rev. LUTHER RICE, *Baptist Missionary to India, to his friend in Hartford, dated Washington County, (Vir.) 13th March*, 1816.

"The success of my feeble exertions the past season in the western country was in part made known to you in my former letter. Four new mission societies have been formed in Kentucky, in addition to the one which before existed in that state auxiliary to the general board. There too as elsewhere the Associations have cheerfully come into the plan of a regular correspondence with the board; and there I received about $1400 for the mission, besides two or three hundred in other places since I left Philadelphia last July. Meantime I hear very happy and animating things from various other parts. The information contained in the Report of the Board produces, as far as I can learn, the best effects wherever circulated. Surely, my Dear Sir, this is the day in which we may attempt *great things*, and expect *great things*. I wish most fervently that our Brethren every where could be induced to exert themselves to the utmost for the promotion of *the truth as it is in Jesus*—for advancing the cause of real piety and godliness.

I thank you very sincerely for your letter and the minutes of the Hartford Association, together with the Report of your Mission Society. The success of the Missionary cause in Connecticut, gives me very great pleasure. The attitude taken by the Hartford Association, is particularly gratifying. The formation of Female Mite Societies, whose donations are acknowledged in your Report, could not fail of imparting to my mind the liveliest joy. I hope to receive a letter from you when I arrive in Philadelphia the 1st of May ensuing. I hope to see you there at the next General Missionary Convention, as I expect to be present at that Convention, it being pretty certain that I shall not return to India until after that time.

Religion appears to be gaining ground on the whole, in the western country, though there is not that I know of any special revival in that quarter: But I hear of happy revivals in other places; may they increase and spread through the whole earth." [*Conn. Courant.*]

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Hadley, (Mass.) to the Editors of this paper, dated April 8, 1816.

"Having observed with pleasure a column of the Courant usually devoted to religious intelligence, I send you the following, which is entirely at your disposal.

"A remarkable work of divine grace began in this place, about two months since, which, in its progress, hitherto, has been *like a mighty rushing wind*, reaching almost every family. The work still goes on, in its full strenth. It is difficult to find any person in the place, who is not sensibly affected by it. Meetings for prayer, preaching and conference, are very frequent—public assemblies are large, and solemn, almost, as the judgment. Yesterday, was a most inter-

esting sabbath, indeed. Rising of eighty, in which number, were found those from fifteen to seventy years of age, made a public profession of their faith in Christ, and united themselves to the communion of the church in this place. Probably as many more, are now *rejoicing in hope*, who at the next communion season, will be of their number. I am happy state, that there is no noise or extravagance attending the work, and that the faith and zeal of good people, is unabated. The hand of prayer is still up, and we have every reason to hope, and to believe, that in answer to prayer, the blessed work will still go on.

"There are also precious revivals in other towns in this vicinity. For the time, the revival has been as extensive, perhaps in Amherst, as in this place. It is very great, also, in Hatfield, in Williamsburg, and in several other of the towns, back from the river. Refreshing showers have been sent upon East and West-Springfield. There are hopeful beginnings, in Northampton, Westhampton, Southamapton, Whately and Sunderland. It is emphatically a day of joy, in this highly favored region; while your religious readers hear of it, I know they will not fail to pray, that it may continue, and that it may continue to spread, until every part of our beloved country may experience its healing power, and a regenerated world be brought to the feet of the victorious LAMB." [*Ibid.*]

RHODE-ISLAND. PROVIDENCE, APRIL 27.

Thursday last was observed as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer to Almighty God, in the town of Barrington, under the afflicting visitation of the prevailing fever. A sermon was preached in the forenoon by the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of this town; and a discourse in the afternoon by the Rev. Mr. Man, of Bristol. The exercises were solemn and impressive; and the audience numerous and attentive.

MASSACHUSETTS. BOSTON, April 24.

From the fourth Annual Report of the New-York Religious Tract Society it appears that during the last year the Managers have distributed 85,576 tracts, of which number 27,893 were sold at the Depository for the sum of $345 87 cents. The resources of the Society have been increasing ever since its formation. The number of tracts distributed during the past year is greater than that of the three preceding years. [*Boston Recorder.*]

CHARITABLE EDUCATION.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church recommended some time since the formation of Dollar Societies in every Presbyterian church in the United States, for the purpose of raising a fund for the support of students in Divinity at the Theological Seminary in Princeton. A Society of this kind has been formed in the town of Princeton, and consists at present of sixty members. At the first annual meeting of this society, recently held, Dr. Green, the President of the College, delivered an Address on the occasion, after which a handsome sum was collected in aid of the object of the Society, besides the annual dollar from the sixty members. [*Ibid.*]

PENNSYLVANIA. PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 27.

On the last Sabbath afternoon, agreeably to arrangements previously made, the children under the direction of the various Committees of the *Evangelical Society* were assembled in the meeting-house in Crown-street, together with the children who are instructed in many of the *Sunday Schools* of the City and Liberties. The whole presented an interesting scene. About 4000 children with their Instructors, were addressed by the Rev. Dr. Brodhead, in his usual animated and energetic manner. The discourse was peculiarly adapted to the occasion, and we hope to have the pleasure of presenting it to our readers in a subsequent Number of the *Remembrancer*.

OHIO. ZANESVILLE, APRIL, 11, 1316.

It is a subject of peculiar gratification to the friends of Religion in this town, and its vicinity, that the erection of a commodious and elegant house for public worship is in contemplation. We understand that a scite and a plan for its construction have been agreed upon.—This measure dictated by necessity, we hope will effect the purpose intended, and add another ornamental edifice to the town.

OBITUARY.

MASSACHUSETTS. In Chatham, 22d ult. the Rev. EPHRAIM BRIGGS, in the 48th year of his age, and 20th of his ministry. Endeared to the people of his charge by a prompt attention to ministerial duties, and an affectionate sympathy in their joys and sorrows, he lived beloved and died greatly lamented, abundantly supported by the hopes and consolations of that religion which he had preached to others—leaving a widow and three children to deplore the loss of an affectionate partner and parent.

MARYLAND. On the 11t ult. in Baltimore, the Rev. FRANCIS CHARLES NAGOT, first superior of the Catholic Seminary, 82 years old.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. AT his lodgings, in Georgetown, on Tuesday the 9th ult. in the 47th year of his age, the Hon. RICHARD STANFORD, a Representative in Congress from this District, and at his death, was the oldest Member of the House of Representatives. He was attacked with symptoms of the prevailing Epidemic on the 31st of March, and took medicine on the 1st April—on the 2d he appeared much better—and as some questions which he deemed of great importance to the agricultural interest were about to be taken in Congress, his great zeal for the public service induced him to attend the House contrary to the earnest advice of his friends. On his return from the House he was taken with a chill which was followed by fever—in a day or two the disease put on the appearance of St. Anthony's fire, and no danger was apprehended—on the 7th the inflamation seized on his brain, which continued to increase in violence till half past 3 o'clock, P. M. on the 9th, when he expired. He was esteemed and respected as an upright man, and useful member of society. His remains were interred with the honors due to his station and merits.

This lamented gentleman was elected to Congress in the year 1796, and has continued to represent the same district ever since. The tribute thus paid to his worth by his constituents, was most eminently merited. All the virtues that made his private character amiable and exemplary, shone throughout his public life. He was honest, sincere, consistent and independent alike in every situation; allowing no motive for any part of his conduct but the single one of serving his gracious Master and Redeemer, to whom he had long devoted himself, whose name he had loved to acknowledge, and whose doctrine he adored. The loss of a christian public man, thus blessed with right principles, is a national affliction. His bereaved family and friends have the best of all consolations in knowing that their loss is his gain; that he was among the faithful here, and is among the blessed forever. [*Nat. Int.*]

AT SEA. It is with pain, says the *Liverpool Advertiser*, of February 17th, we have to announce the loss of three transports, the Seahorse, Lord Melville, and Boadicea, on the coast of Ireland, with many officers and men, being part of the army from France. The Seahorse, after losing both anchors, drifted upon the sands between Tramore and the furthest end of the rabit burrow, about six miles from Waterford, and in a few minutes went entirely to pieces. The number of lives lost by this melancholy catastrophe was as follows: Officers, 12; soldiers, 262; seamen, 14; 1 passenger; 1 officer's wife; soldier's wives, 30; officer's children, 2; soldier's children, 40—Total, 365.—The number saved amounted only to 32. The

unfortunate females, it is said, met their fate with uncommon firmness. As the ship drifted towards the shore, with the sea making a clear breach over her, they embraced their husbands, and bade them a final farewell. Mrs. Baird went into the cabin with her children, saying to an officer—"It is the will of Heaven," and was seen no more. The wife of a private said—"Will you die with me and your child? but you may escape, and this may be of use," giving him her pocket with a sum of money; she even took out her ear-rings, and put them in it. Herself and child were lost! the survivor, more wretched than they, lives to tell the tale as tears mark his manly face. The Lord Melville and the Boadicea brig rode out the gale for some time, but at length were driven on the rocks between the Old Head and the Swan Heads. Shortly after the Lord Melville struck, her boat was launched and manned with five seamen, two officers and two ladies, supposed to be their wives; an assistant surgeon, a sergeant and his wife and child, in the hope of gaining the shore; but in a few moments she was struck by a wave and swamped; and every soul perished with the exception of one of the seamen, who reached the land scarcely alive. All the rest of the people fortunately remained in the vessel, which at low water, in the course of the night, was left nearly dry; and at about one or two o'clock, they succeeded in getting safely to land, to the number of about 400 souls. The Boadicea was distinctly seen by the revenue officers and military party, with a light at her topmast, till after midnight.—The light and vessel then disappeared altogether, and her fate was easily anticipated. Next morning her fragments were discovered among the rocks which lie between the two strands of Garretts-town, and where she had been driven after parting from her anchors in the night. Upon approaching the wreck, a most heart-rending scene of misery, desolation and death, presented itself to the view. The vessel seemed to be a confused mass of timber, planks, and boards, broken to pieces, and intermixed with piles of dead bodies—men, women, and children! Near to the wreck was a rock somewhat elevated above the surface of the water, and upon this were seen about 80 or 90 poor human creatures, who had scrambled to it from the vessel, and were still alive. The people from the shore communicated to them as well as they could, that their only chance of safety was in remaining where they were until low water; but either through impatience of the misery of their situation, or from the impulse of despair, near 30 of them plunged into the sea, and endeavoured to gain the shore, but in vain, as most of them perished in the attempt. About 60 remained on the rock until low water, and were all saved. The Boadicea, it is said, had on board 280 officers and privates.

POETICAL DEPARTMENT.

SELECTED.

To the Editor of the Christian Visitant.

SIR,

If the following Hymn should be found appropriate to this Evening's Reflections, please insert it.

OMICRON.

Tho' troubles assail, and dangers affright,
Tho' friends should all fail, and foes all unite;
Yet one thing secures us whatever betide,
The Scripture assures us the Lord will provide.

The birds without barn or storehouse are fed,
From them let us learn to trust for our bread;
His saints what is fitting shall ne'er be denied,
So long as 'tis written the Lord will provide.

No strength of our own, or goodness we claim;
But since we have known the Saviour's great name,
In this our strong tower for safety we hide;
The Lord is our power, the Lord will provide.

When life sinks apace, and death is in view,
The word of his grace shall comfort us thro';
Not fearing or doubting, with Christ on our side,
We hope to die shouting, the Lord will provide.

ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.

BY HILL.

Part of the Sermon on the Mount.

LET shining charity adorn your zeal,
The noblest impulse gen'rous minds can feel:
But have a care you take this virtue right,
And shun the glare of the proud hypocrite.
Mistaken men! who, fond of public fame,
Disgrace the act, while they affect the name!
On earth, vain-glorious zeal may meet regard,
But heav'n nor owns it, nor vouchafes reward.

Thou, on the contrary, whose pitying breast
Wou'd, as it ought, give ease to the distrest;
Scarce tell thy right hand, what thy left will do,
But be at once resolv'd and silent too.
Secret, as night, thy pious alms convey;
For God, who sees by night, rewards by day.

So, when thy soul approaches God in pray'r,
Be not deceiv'd, as those false zealots are,
Who daily into crowded temples press,
And there, with feign'd devotion, heav'n address;
But, when thou pray'st, all public notice shun,
And, private, to thy inmost closet run:
There, close and earnest, to thy duty fall,
And God will show thee that he hears thy call.

Swell not thy forms of pray'r with wild desires,
Excess of fuel chokes the brightest fires;
The erring heathen so mistake their way,
And think they best are heard who most can say.
But shun thou this, and know God's piercing eye
Sees all thy wants before thy words come nigh.
From rising malice guard thy yielding will,
Nor proudly dare to take revenge for ill:
Thou must forgive, that God may pardon thee;
For none that pities not shall pitied be.

Misled by av'rice, seek not wealth to gain,
By hoarding treasures which are got in vain:
Deceitful riches, which the moth destroys,
Which rust consumes, or the bold thief enjoys!
In heav'n's high storehouse, let your heaps be laid,
A wealth which no destroyer can invade;
No moth there enters, rust corrupts not there,
Nor plund'ring thief alarms the owner's care:
Safe, therefore, in that place, your treasures lay;
For where your riches are, your heart will stay.

Secure of heav'n's regard, live free from care,
Nor toil, life's common comforts to prepare:
Banish vain forecast for thy needful gain,
Nor let meat, drink, and clothing, give thee pain,
Observe the fowls—they neither reap, nor sow,
Yet find their wants supply'd, where'er they go.
Look on the lilies of the ripening field:
No toil of theirs does those sweet colours yield;
Yet was not Solomon, when drest to please,
So glorious adorn'd as one of these.
If, therefore, God so feeds the feather'd train,
So clothes the grass, which withers on the plain.
How much more careful will he be of you,
O, faithless man! who yet distrusts him too?

The last lines composed by the late pious and Rev. CHARLES WESLEY, A. M. a little before his departure, which he dictated to his wife, but could scarcely articulate, were the following:

In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
Jesus! my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
I'll sweetly catch one smile from Thee
And drop into Eternity.

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